

1. INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The work of preparation of a new survey of all the Pteridophytes of Malaysia will occupy a considerable period. It is proposed to publish this work in parts, as studies of particular families or genera are completed, but it is impossible to plan in advance the precise sequence of these studies.

It is anticipated that the new information to be recorded, and new ideas based upon it, will throw a good deal of new light on the delimitation of genera, and upon the inter-relationships of genera, especially among the ferns, which are by far the largest of the major groups concerned. Therefore one cannot now predict what final scheme of classification will emerge. But it is necessary to have some sort of conspectus at the start, as a preliminary survey of the ground to be covered, and as a guide for those who wish to consult the parts of the work as they appear. I have therefore drawn up a list of the major groups, with the genera in each, and also a series of keys to the genera of ferns. The nomenclature of the major groups, the generic concepts, and the keys, must all be regarded as tentative.

As regards the major groups, there are differences of opinion as to the status of each and as to the most appropriate names. I hope at least that the significance of the names here used is clear. As regards the ferns, there is still no general agreement as to the subdivision of the vast and heterogeneous assemblage formerly known as *Polypodiaceae*, though the more primitive families are clearly defined. In the conspectus which follows, I have arranged the genera of *Polypodiaceae sens. lat.* in Groups which seem to me to be natural, but I have given no formal names to the Groups, nor specified their status, except for *Polypodiaceae sens. strict.* and *Grammitidaceae*, which (with the exception of a few genera) are also accepted by COPELAND. The fern specimens in the Herbarium at Bogor are now arranged according to these Groups. Probably the Groups will be modified in any final re-assessment at the conclusion of their treatment in 'Flora Malesiana'. So far as possible, genera within a family or Group will be treated together.

There are two alternative General Keys, which lead to families or Groups of genera. In the first key a principal distinction is between epiphytes and terrestrial ferns; in the second key this distinction is not used.

The delimitation of some genera of ferns is still not clear, and the generic names are to be taken as tentative. In general, they are those accepted in COPELAND'S *Genera Filicum* (1947), but there are some changes.

Critical literature on fern taxonomy up to the year 1934 is very fully listed in CHRISTENSEN'S *Index Filicum* and its three *Supplements*. Some important books and papers subsequently published and dealing with Malaysian ferns are listed after the keys to genera.

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